

Washington, DC - Working to improve the health, safety, and security of residents in the 39th district, Congresswoman Linda Sánchez (CA-39) today announced that she has secured \$500,000 for the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (COG) to study congestion and emissions problems on key highways in the Southeast LA County region. The funds were secured in the Fiscal Year 2004 Transportation, Treasury and Independent Agencies Appropriations bill, which passed the House Appropriations Committee today. The bill is expected to be passed in the U.S. House of Representatives shortly.

“Diesel emissions, increasing levels of congestion, and traffic accidents are a major problem in Southern California. To help solve these issues, the Gateway Cities Council of Governments has a plan to create new traffic management strategies and technologies to improve the flow of commuters and goods on our roadways,” said Congresswoman Linda Sánchez.

Earlier this year, Sánchez met with members of the COG, who asked for her help in securing federal funding for what is being termed the “Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) pre-deployment project.” The project is a study designed to improve traffic flow and environmental issues in our region.

Congresswoman Sánchez made the request to the Appropriations Committee to fund this study. She asked and received the support of her L.A. colleagues — Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard, Congresswoman Juanita Millender-McDonald, and Congresswoman Grace Napolitano.

“The \$500,000 will fund a transportation study to take a ‘systematic look’ at the freeways and major arterials in Southeast LA County. It will also explore different state-of-the-art traffic technologies that can be used to maximize the effectiveness of these highways for transportation by commuters and trucks,” said Congresswoman Linda Sánchez.

Specifically included in the study will be the 605 Freeway, which is carrying rising port-related truck traffic and resulting congestion in the areas of Whittier, Long Beach, Lakewood, and Cerritos. The study design has now grown to include all the freeways and major arterial roads in our region, including the 5, 60, 91, 405, and 710 freeways.

The study is also expected to:

- Explore ways to optimize the timing of traffic signals and freeway on-ramp meters, even allowing them to be customized in “real time” by a regional traffic control center. It’s estimated this can reduce traffic wait times by 15%.
- Look at ways to schedule the timing of truck travel to the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, and to create a “ground traffic control system” similar to “air traffic control” systems at airports to signal to trucks when they should leave their staging grounds to come to the port for an open slot.
- Review options for combining this with an “in-vehicle navigation system” for trucks to help find the best route at any point in time to get to and from the ports. This will reduce traffic on

freeways as well as reduce idling and stop-and-go travel by trucks on the freeways and near the ports. Stop-and-go travel causes some of the greatest air pollution from trucks.

The total cost to complete the study is million. The \$500,000 is a first step to getting the study funded and Congresswoman Sánchez will continue to work with the communities to help secure the additional necessary funding.

“I am delighted to have secured the funding to begin this critical study of our roadways. This project will help find ways to improve commute time and air quality, and to create safer highways for Southeast Los Angeles County residents,” concluded Sánchez.